

LIST OF CURRENT CLAIMS

Claims 1-13 (Canceled)

14. (New) A transfer gripper for a rapier weaving loom, comprising a base body and at least first and second yarn clamps arranged to retain in readiness relative to the base body a length of a weft yarn to be taken up by a receiving gripper, said length of weft yarn during operation of the transfer gripper extending between the yarn clamps in extended and tensioned condition to enable the respective weft yarn to be taken up by a receiving gripper, said second yarn clamp comprising at least one clamping element resiliently yieldable in response to additional tensile force applied to the length of weft yarn to permit deflection of the length of weft yarn between the yarn clamps in response to the additional tensile force while maintaining the length of weft yarn extended in tension between the yarn clamps.

15. (New) The transfer gripper of claim 14, including a resilient biasing element cooperating with the clamping element and located rearwardly of the clamping element relative to a leading end of the weft yarn.

16. (New) The transfer gripper of claim 14, including a resilient biasing element cooperating with the clamping element.

17. (New) The transfer gripper of claim 16, wherein the resilient biasing element is arranged to constitute a weft yarn clamping part of the clamping element.

18. (New) The transfer gripper of claim 14, said base body including first and second side walls, a top side and a bottom; a first yarn guide disposed in the region of said first side wall and the bottom, and a second yarn guide disposed in the

region of the second side wall and the top side; said first and second yarn clamps respectively disposed in the vicinity of said first and second yarn guides.

19. (New) The transfer gripper of claim 14, including a fixed clamping face cooperating with said resiliently yieldable clamping element for engaging and retaining said length of weft yarn.

20. (New) The transfer gripper of claim 19, wherein said clamping element is arranged so as to be movable away from the fixed clamping face in response to a tensile force applied to the length of weft yarn extending between the first and second yarn clamps.

21. (New) The transfer gripper of claim 20, wherein the clamping element is arranged so that it is rotatable about an axis extending along a direction of motion of the transfer gripper in response to an additional tensile force applied to the length of weft yarn extending between the yarn clamps.

22. (New) The transfer gripper of claim 19, said base including an inner face of a top side of the base body, said inner face comprising said fixed clamping face.

23. (New) The transfer gripper of claim 19, said fixed clamping face comprising a clamping piece mounted on the base body.

24. (New) The transfer gripper of claim 14, said clamping element comprising a leaf spring.

25. (New) The transfer gripper of claim 14, said clamping element including a guide element protruding outwardly towards a front end of the base body, and below the region of a clamping location of the second yarn clamp.

26. (New) The transfer gripper of claim 14, wherein a clamping location of the second yarn clamp is disposed rearwardly relative to the first yarn clamp and relative to a leading end of the weft yarn.

27. (New) The transfer gripper of claim 14, said base body including a side wall and a yarn guide defined at least in part by the side wall, said side wall further defining a yarn stop, wherein the clamping location of the second yarn clamp is located forward of the yarn stop relative to an advancing direction of motion of the transfer gripper in operation.

28. (New) The transfer gripper of claim 14, said at least one clamping element comprising a pair of clamping elements disposed lengthwise along the length of weft yarn, said pair of clamping elements having different resilient yielding strengths for responding differently to additional tensile forces applied to the length of weft yarn, and wherein the clamping element located closer to the first clamping element has a lower yielding strength than the other clamping element.